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**Testimony by Representative Tom Reynolds**  
**Transportation Committee**  
**February 14, 2011**

**House Bill 6202, An Act Requiring the Use of Ignition Locking Devices**

Senator Maynard, Representative Guerrera, and distinguished members of the Transportation Committee, I am pleased to testify in support of HB 6202, An Act Requiring the Use of Ignition Interlock Devices.

Every 48 minutes there is a drunk driving fatality in this country. One of every 141 drivers in the nation has been arrested for driving under the influence. The average drunk driver has driven drunk 87 times before a first arrest.

Connecticut is among the nation's worst offenders. In 2009 44% of all traffic fatalities in Connecticut were alcohol related—the second highest percentage in the entire nation and a 7% increase over 2008.

This legislation would mandate the use of an ignition interlock device (IID) for all repeat DUI offenders. An IID is an electronic breathalyzer connected to the ignition of a vehicle that measures breath alcohol concentration and prevents a driver from starting the vehicle if the driver's blood alcohol content exceeds a specified limit. A retest is required within randomly variable intervals while a driver is driving a vehicle to ensure that the driver's blood alcohol content (BAC) remains below the maximum allowable level.

Connecticut already utilizes this technology. However, it is only mandatory for a very small number of our most chronic offenders, and it is simply an option judges may require for all other repeat offenders. This has resulted in only 442 offenders in the program today, while there are over 4,000 repeat offenders every year.

This legislation acknowledges that Connecticut's public policy on DUI has failed. This legislation acknowledges two harsh realities: license suspensions and fines have not changed the behaviors of repeat DUI offenders and 3 out of 4 offenders with a suspended license drive anyway. This is why states are adopting the mandatory use of IID's for repeat offenders as the most effective strategy for changing offenders' behaviors, while allowing offenders to drive to and from work.

Studies have shown ignition interlocks are on average 64% effective in reducing repeat drunk driving offenses. In some jurisdictions results range from 50 to 90 percent reductions in subsequent offenses by those offenders who were assigned interlock devices, compared with those who were not.

It is important to remember that the offender pays the cost of the installation of the device and the monitoring service. Also, last year Connecticut adopted a user fee of \$100 for each IID participant that will help to defray the cost of the program's expansion. I am now working with Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) and the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to develop consensus legislative language to ensure that the expansion of the program is fiscally sustainable.

Every drunk driving death is a preventable crime. The time for complacency is over. Connecticut's ranking among the worst in the country is a national embarrassment. The time for legislative and gubernatorial leadership is now.